

## Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 156399

EXDIS FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT PORT LOUIS 692 ACTION SECSTATE JUNE 19

QUOTE S E C R E T PORT LOUIS 0692

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CG XA XJ PBOR PDEV PORG UNSC OAU US UR CU MOPS

SUBJECT: AFRICAN POLICY: SHABA, SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT

REF: STATE 153145

SUMMARY. THIS CABLE RESPONDS TO REQUEST IN REFTEL  
FOR COMMZNTS ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S PROPOSALS REGARDING  
AFRICAN PROBLEM-SOLVING. AFTER ANALYZING THE RECORD  
OF THE OAU AND THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH IT OPERATES,  
IT CONCLUDES THAT LITTLE HELP CAN BE EXPECTED FROM  
THAT QUARTER IN DEALING WITH CONFLICT SITUATIONS  
IN AFRICA AND SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION. IT FINDS  
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 156399

MERIT, HOWEVER, IN SUGGESTION FOR GREATER UNITED  
NATIONS INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICAN PEACE-KEEPING AND  
RECOMMENDS A LOOK AT THE UN PEACE-KEEPING EFFORT  
(WHICH USG SUPPORTED) IN ZAIRE IN THE EARLY SIXTIES,  
WHICH WAS A SUCCESS FOR U.S. POLICY. END SUMMARY.

1. CONSULTATIONS WITH A BROAD RANGE OF WELL-EXPOSED  
AFRICAN LEADERS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH INTRA-AFRICAN  
CONFLICTS WOULD BE USEFUL BOTH TO OBTAIN THE BENEFIT  
OF THEIR IDEAS AND TO COMMUNICATE TO THEM OUR CONCERN  
OVER THE ESCALATING SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION WHICH,

THOUGH NOT NEW, HAS REACHED A LEVEL THREATENING TO INVITE GREAT-POWER CONFLICT ON AFRICAN SOIL.

2.( WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT MUCH IF ANY HELP FROM THE OAU, BASED ON ITS PAST PERFORMANCE. IT HAS MAINTAINED A DISMAL RECORD OF EVADING MEDIATION OF INTER-STATE CONFLICTS AND OF IGNORING OUTRAGEOUS BREACHES OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT CONDUCT AS IN UGANDA AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA. THE OAU HAS BEEN INSTITUTIONALLY ABLE TO ACT ONLY IN CASES WHERE THERE HAS BEEN UNANIMITY OF OPINION AMONG THE MEMBERS, FOR EXAMPLE IN PRESSING FOR THE OVERTHROW OF WHITE-DOMINATED REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. IN ALL CASES WHERE THERE HAS EXISTED A CONFLICT BETWEEN AFRICAN STATES OR A STRONG DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AMONG THEM ON A CONTINENTAL ISSUE, IMMOBILITY HAS BEEN THE RULE. WITNESS THE FAILURES TO DEAL WITH THE ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA AND WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICTS. EVEN A CAUSE SUCH AS

THE CIVIL WAR IN ANGOLA IN 1975 FOUND THE OAU IMMOBILIZED BECAUSE OF DIVIDED OPINION, UNTIL THE DIRECT INTERVENTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES AGAINST THE MPLA RALLIED NEAR UNANIMOUS OAU MEMBER SUPPORT TO THE SIDE OF THE MPLA  
SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 156399

AND AGAINST THE OTHER TWO ANGOLAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, UNITA AND THE FNLA.

3. THE MEMBERS OF THE OAU ADHERE TO SEVERAL CARDINAL PRINCIPLES: (A) ANY CHANGE IN THE BORDERS INHERITED FROM THE COLONIAL PERIOD IS TO BE CONDEMNED AND OPPOSED; (B) SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS OF WHATEVER CHARACTER ARE TO BE CONDEMNED AND OPPOSED; (C) GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS ATTEMPTING THE OVERTHROW OF "LEGITIMATE" GOVERNMENTS ARE TO BE CONDEMNED AND OPPOSED (THE WHITE GOVERNMENTS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA ARE BY DEFINITION NOT "LEGITIMATE" ALL THE OTHERS ARE "LEGITIMATE" REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY CAME TO POWER). BECAUSE OF THESE PRINCIPLES SOMALIA HAS ENJOYED ALMOST ZERO SUPPORT FROM OAU MEMBERS IN ITS CONFLICT WITH ETHIOPIA AND LIKEWISE THE ERITREANS (WHO ENJOY ARAB BUT NOT BLACK AFRICAN SUPPORT). BECAUSE THE THREE PRINCIPLES ABOVE ARE CONSIDERED SACROSANCT, MOBUTU HAS BENEFITTED FROM MUCH GREATER TACIT SUPPORT IN THE SHABA INCIDENTS THAN ONE WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE EXPECTED, AND THE EUROPEAN RESCUE OPERATION AT KOLWEZI RECEIVED MUCH LESS CONDEMNATION THAN ONE MIGHT HAVE ANTICIPATED. (COMPARE THE NEARLY UNIVERSAL AFRICAN OUTCRY OVER THE SIMILAR OPERATION IN STANLEYVILLE IN 1964, BEFORE THESE OAU PRINCIPLES HAD BECOME SO FIRMLY ENTRENCHED.)

4. MERCENARIES, BY OAU DEFINITION, ARE EXTRA-CONTINENTAL FORCES EMPLOYED TO ATTEMPT THE OVERTHROW

OF A "LEGITIMATE" GOVERNMENT OR TO SUPPORT A SECESSIONIST  
MOVEMENT OR TO EFFECT A CHANGE IN EXISTING BORDERS.  
EXTRA-CONTINENTAL FORCES USED IN CONTRARY SENSES ARE  
NOT CONSIDERED MERCENARIES, WHICH IS WHY THE CUBANS  
HAVE ESCAPED CONDEMNATION BY MOST AFRICANS AND WHY  
CASTRO AND HIS ALLIES HAVE BEEN AT PAINS TO DENY  
THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE KATANGANS, WHO  
REPRESENT A SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT CHALLENGING A  
SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 156399

"LEGITIMATE" GOVERNMENT.

5. LIKE YOUNG STATES ON OTHER CONTINENTS, THE MEMBERS  
OF THE OAU ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT ANYTHING THAT  
SMACKS OF CHALLENGES TO SOVEREIGNTY OR  
QUESTIONING OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER INTERNAL AFFAIRS.  
THIS ACCOUNTS FOR THE COMPLETE NEGLECT OF AFRICAN  
LEADERS TO DEAL WITH THE ATROCIOUS INTERNAL REPRESSIONS  
IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS UGANDA AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA.  
AND IT ALSO EXPLAINS THE NEARLY TOTAL ABSENCE OF CRITICISM  
OF THE DEPENDENCE OF STATES SUCH AS ETHIOPIA AND ANGOLA  
ON CUBAN TROOPS TO DEFEND THEIR BORDERS, SUPPRESS  
SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS AND COUNTER CHALLENGERS TO THEIR  
CONTINUED RULE (SUCH AS UNITA). REGARDLESS OF WHAT  
ELSE THEY MIGHT BE, THE MENGISTU AND NETO (AND AMIN  
AND MACIAS) REGIMES ARE CONSIDERED "LEGITIMATE" AND  
THEREFORE THEY HAVE THE "SOVEREIGN" RIGHT TO DO ANYTHING  
THEY PLEASE WITHIN THEIR OWN BORDERS. THIS COULD BE  
CONSIDERED A STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH CARDINAL PRINCIPLE  
OF THE OAU MEMBERSHIP.

6. THE MASSIVE INJECTIONS OF SOVIET ARMS AND CUBAN  
FORCES INTO PLACES SUCH AS ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA IN  
RECENT YEARS HAVE NOT AROUSED THE CRITICISM AND  
CONDEMNATION THAT WE MIGHT HAVE WISHED BECAUSE THEY  
HAVE BEEN INVITED BY THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED  
AND HAVE BEEN USED IN SUPPORT OF THE CARDINAL PRINCIPLES  
OF THE OAU DESCRIBED ABOVE. THIS SITUATION, HOWEVER ONE  
MIGHT DEPLORE IT, WILL NOT CHANGE SOON, AND IT MUST  
THEREFORE BE ACCEPTED AS A REALITY. THE POTENTIAL  
FUTURE INTERVENTIONS OF THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN  
SUPPORT OF THE MOVEMENTS CHALLENGING WHITE REGIMES IN  
SOUTHERN AFRICA WILL BE SUBJECT TO EVEN LESS CRITICISM  
SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 156399

(IN FACT, PROBABLY NONE AT ALL) BECAUSE IN ADDITION TO  
THE "LEGITIMACY" OF SUCH HELP, THERE IS THE EMOTIONAL  
CONTENT OF THE STRUGGLE OF OPPRESSED BLACKS TO  
LIBERATE THEMSELVES FROM WHITE DOMINATION.

7. ALL OF THE ABOVE IS PRESENTED TO SUPPORT THE CONCLUSION THAT IT IS FUTILE TO TRY TO OPPOSE OR PREVENT SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION WHEN IT IS SANCTIONED BY DEFENSE OF THE CARDINAL OAU PRINCIPLES OUTLINED ABOVE. OUR SOLE RECOURSE IS TO FORECLOSE, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE CREATION OF SITUATIONS WHICH LEAD AN AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO INVITE SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT BECAUSE OF ITS DESPERATE NEED FOR FOREIGN HELP. THIS ARGUES IN FAVOR OF THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE DIPLOMATIC EFFORT TO RESOLVE OR AMELIORATE DISPUTES WHICH INVOLVE: (A) EFFORTS TO CHANGE BORDERS; (B) SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS; (C) DISSIDENT MOVEMENTS TRYING TO OVERTHROW GOVERNMENT.

8. TO CITE BUT ONE EXAMPLE, WE SHOULD HAVE DONE EVERYTHING WITHIN OUR POWER TO OPPOSE AND PREVENT THE SOMALI IRREDENTIST EFFORT TO INCORPORATE THE OGADEN, NO MATTER HOW JUSTIFIED IT MIGHT BE ON TRIBAL, HISTORICAL OR OTHER GROUNDS. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IT IS AND WAS IMPORTANT TO BE ON THE RIGHT SIDE REGARDING THE ERITREAN SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT. (THE CUBANS WERE ON THE WRONG SIDE AND HAVE NOW BECOME NEUTRAL AND WILL PROBABLY EVENTUALLY SWITCH.) THIS IS A MOST UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION TO ADVOCATE, AS IT IS UNJUST TO THE ERITREANS, WHO SHOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN GIVEN THEIR INDEPENDENCE INSTEAD OF BEING INCORPORATED INTO ETHIOPIA (BUT THAT IS A MISTAKE MADE IN THE PAST AND TOO LATE TO BE CORRECTED NOW).

9. IMPORTANT LESSONS COULD BE LEARNED FROM A STUDY OF THE NIGERIA-BIAFRA CIVIL WAR FOR THIS WHOLE QUESTION OF SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS. HAD NIGERIA BEEN A SMALL,  
SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 156399

POOR AND WEAK COUNTRY AT THE TIME OF THE BIAFRAN SECESSION, AND HAD CUBAN TROOPS BEEN NEEDED TO PUT DOWN THE SECESSION, WHAT WOULD BE THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE U.S. AND THE SOVIETS/CUBANS IN NIGERIA TODAY.

10. IT IS TRUE THAT THE BORDERS OF AFRICAN STATES WERE NOT DRAWN RATIONALLY. YET, THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE. TO REDRAW THEM TO ELIMINATE OR AMELIORATE THE PROBLEM OF OPPRESSED ETHNIC OR TRIBAL MINORITIES WOULD REQUIRE THE CREATION OF A THOUSAND OR MORE MINISTATES ON A CONTINENT WHERE ONLY A FEW STATES ARE VIABLE ECONOMIC ENTITIES AT THEIR PRESENT SIZE. IF ANYTHING, THE DIRECTION SHOULD BE TOWARD THE CREATION OF A UNITED STATES OF AFRICA, WHEREIN ETHNIC RIVALRIES WOULD BECOME SUBMERGED WITHIN A MUCH LARGER, RACIALLY COHESIVE IF TRIBALLY DISPARATE, ECONOMICALLY PROMISING CONTINENTAL STATE. EVEN IN CASES WHERE THE BORDERS WERE DRAWN RATIONALLY THE COLONIAL POWERS--RWANDA AND BURUNDI--ETHNIC CONFLICT HAS NOT BEEN AVOIDED,

IN FACT HAS BEEN BLOODIER THAN NARLY ANYWHERE ELSE, AS THE TUTSI HAVE SLAUGHTERED THE HUTU IN BURUNDI AND THE HUTU HAVE MASSACRED THE TUTSI IN RWANDA. ONE MIGHT HOPE THAT EVENTUALLY, IN A UNITED STATES OF AFRICA, THE TUTSI AND THE HUTU MIGHT BEHAVE NO WORSE THAN THE HATFIELDS AND THE MCCOYS.

11. THE RECORD OF THE OAU DOES NOT LEAD ONE TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE UTILITY OF AN AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION FOR DEALING WITH SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS. THE EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF AFRICAN STATES OVER CHALLENGES TO THEIR "SOVEREIGNTY" AND OUTSIDE CONCERN OR INTERVENTION IN WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS MAKES IT DOUBTFUL THAT A HUMAN RIGHTS  
SECRET

PAGE 07 STATE 156399

COMMISSION--IF IT COULD EVEN BE ESTABLISHED--WOULD ACHIEVE ANYTHING MORE THAN EXPEND SCARCE FUNDS ON CONFERENCES. THERE IS NOT A SINGLE AFRICAN COUNTRY WHICH IS WITHOUT AN "ETHNIC MINORITY PROBLEM," AND IT IS PREDICTABLE THAT THE GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARD A COMMISSION WOULD BE: "IF YOU WON'T TALK ABOUT MY PROBLEM, I WON'T TALK ABOUT YOURS."

12. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SUGGESTION THAT WE ENCOURAGE THE AFRICANS TO RESORT MORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR PEACE-KEEPING MACHINERY, MEDIATION AND EVEN MILITARY FORCES HAS MERI, AND IT IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING THAT THIS RESOURCE HAS BEEN PRETTY MUCH NEGLECTED BY THE AFRICANS IN RECENT YEARS. IT WAS NOT SO LONG AGO THAT THEHUN WAS HEAVILY ENGAGED IN PEACE-KEEPING IN AFRICA. ZAIRE WAS ONE OF THE FOUR PRINCIPAL FOREIGN POLICY PREOCCUPATIONS OF THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION (THE OTHERS HAVING BEEN CUBA, LAOS AND BERLIN). MOISE TSCHOMBE'S SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IN KATANGA WAS SUPPRESSED BY AN INTERNATINAL MILITARY FORCE UNDER THE UN FLAG LARGELY FINANCED BY THE USG. IT IS TRUE THAT THE SOVIETS AND THEIR ALLIES REFUSED TO SHARE THE COSTS AND THIS NEARLY BANKRUPTED THE UN, BUT THE ULTIMATE BENEFIT OF AVOIDING DIRECT GREAT POWER CONFLICT IN AFRICA WAS WORTH THE COST. THERE IS NO DOUBT AN UNDERSTANDABLE RELUCTANCE FOR US TO ADVOCATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UN PEACEKEEPING FORCES IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA IN SUPPORT OF MARXIST REGIMES SUCH AS THOSE OF NETO AND MENGISTU, BUT IF THE ALTERNATIVE TO UN INVOLVEMENT IS CUBAN MILITARY FORCES WITH MASSIVE INJECTIONS OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT, PERHAPS WE NEED TO EXAMINE THE OPTIONS AGAIN.

13. THE PROPOSALS FOR MUTUAL RESTRAINT ON WEAPONS SUPPLY AND INTERVENTION SOUND A BIT UTOPIAN. THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY OVER CUBAN RESPONSIBLIITY FOR SHABA

SECRET

PAGE 08 STATE 156399

TWO SHOWS THAT AN OUTSIDE POWER CAN CLAIM IT IS EXERCISING RESTRAINT (AND CAN CONVINCE AT LEAST SOME PEOPLE) WHEN THAT IS QUESTIONABLE. WE WONDER ALSO WHETHER THE SOVIETS WOULD BE ANY MORE WILLING THAN WE ARE TO TIE THEIR HANDS IN ADVANCE IN A FASHION THAT WOULD PREVENT THEM FROM HELPING THEIR IDEOLOGICAL BRETHREN IN TIME OF NEED. THE SECURITY COUNCIL VETO COULD BE AN ADDITIONAL HINDRANCE.

14. TO CONCLUDE, WE NEED TO EXAMINE EACH INTER-AFRICAN CONFLICT AS AN INDIVIDUAL CASE TO FIND AN APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION, AS EACH ONE HAS ITS SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND IT IS DIFFICULT, PERHAPS IMPOSSIBLE, TO GENERALIZE AN "AFRICAN POLICY" TO COVER ALL SUCH SITUATIONS. WE SHOULD MOBILIZE ALL OUR DIPLOMATIC RESOURCES TO PREVENT SUCH CONFLICTS FROM ESCALATING TO THE POINT WHERE AN AFRICAN GOVERNMENT FEELS REQUIRED TO CALL IN SOVIET/CUBAN HELP, RECOGNIZING THAT SUCH FOREIGN INTERVENTION WILL BE TOLERATED BY MOST AFRICANS IF IT IS EMPLOYED TO DEFEND NATIONAL FRONTIERS, TO SUPPRESS A SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT, OR TO PRESERVE A "LEGITIMATE" GOVERNMENT IN POWER. IF WE ARE UNSUCCESSFUL IN PREVENTING SUCH ESCALATION, WE SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER RESORTING TO A UN PEACEKEEPING EFFORT AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT. WHILE THE UN CANNOT REACT AS QUICKLY AS THE SOVIETS (OR OURSELVES) SUCH "NEUTRAL" ASSISTANCE COULD BE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO AFRICAN STATES SENSITIVE ABOUT THEIR "SOVEREIGNTY" THAT COMMUNIST SUPPORT, EVEN IF THE AFRICAN REGIME IN QUESTION IS MARXIST.

15. AS PART OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT STUDY OF THIS PROBLEM, IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TO TAKE A  
SECRET

PAGE 09 STATE 156399

LOOK AGAIN AT THE U.S. AND UN INVOLVEMENTS IN ZAIRE IN THE EARLY SIXTIES, WHICH FROM TODAY'S PERSPECTIVE APPEAR A DECIDED SUCCESS FOR U.S. POLICY, AND TO COMPARE OUR PERFORMANCE THEN WITH ANGOLA IN 1975 AND ETHIOPIA/SOMALIA IN 1977-78, WHERE THERE WAS NOT RESORT TO THE UN AND OUR INVOLVEMENT WAS MOSTLY CLANDESTINE (UNTIL CUT OFF) IN ONE CASE OR ABSENT ENTIRELY IN THE OTHER. KEELEY.  
UNQUOTE VANCE

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